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**THE ROLE OF CIVIL SOCIETY AND NGOS
IN LIFEWIDE LEARNING**

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ABSTRACT

I. Introduction / motivation

Lacking a well-defined, conscious and active citizenship, democracies of the modern age did not prove to be able to operate in a sustainable way. A great number of NGOs have worked on creating the fine, but strong tissue of the society that has become a separate strand of the economy by now and that we call the non-profit sector. Besides its role in the economy, this sector has been active traditionally in liberal learning, in the adult learning aimed at enhancing equal opportunities.

It was not until the economic downturn of the 1970-ies, the crisis of the welfare states and the weakening of the socialist systems when the civil society, civil thoughts were rediscovered and reinterpreted, and as part of this 'wakening', researchers focused now on the possible resources of adult learning and life long learning as an answer to challenges. Relations between LLL and actors of the non-profit sector have gained an increasing amount of attention in international studies and by professional organisations working with adult learning (Eurydice 2000, Jarvis 2007, Leirman 1998, OECD 1996, UNESCO 1997 and others). LLL refers to learning beginning at pre-school level and lasting over years of retirement. It includes formal, non-formal and informal learning and in general all learning activity that aims to develop skills and competences and to contribute to personal, civic, social and employment goals. The reason why LLL has been in the centre of attention of the European educational policy is that the Lisbon summit in 2000 set the ambitious goal that Europe should become the most dynamic and knowledge-based society of the world by 2010. Low participation democracies of the EU set a double goal for the implementation of LLL strategies: enhancement of employability and active citizenship.

Evidences gained by socio-pedagogical studies of the last decades shed light on the fact that social and cultural capital could be converted into economic capital if the necessary cohesion and credibility are available in the particular society (Bourdieu 1997, Coleman 1966, 1988, 1994, Fukuyama 1997, 1999, 2000, Granovetter 1988, Putman 1994, 2000).

In Hungary, rebirth of the civil society and democratisation of adult learning progressed parallel. In the last 15-20 years, civil society of the country experienced enormous qualitative and quantitative changes. A new set of rules was born and an increasing number of NGOs were established. At the same time, the number of volunteers and employees grew as well as the income of and financial support to the sector. Nevertheless, the sector is not homogenous: it consists of organisations with great differences in their legal and institutional background and in their resources. Most of the organisations struggle constantly with liquidity problems, operational uncertainties, lacking trained workforce in terms of financial and legal issues, and many are dependent on state support. Differences in the legal status result in significant differentiation. Since the introduction of such forms as *public foundation* and *public benefit companies (kht)* one can differentiate between the 'classic' NGOs (private foundations, associations) and the above mentioned organisations established by private companies or state institutions (the transformation of the *kht*-s into economic organisation or other legal forms is underway). These second type organisations contribute strongly to the strengths of sectoral statistics. To sum up, the civil sector can be characterized by heterogeneity, functional variety and in most cases economic instability, with a legal background and support policy that enhances these differences.

In the last decades of the 20th century, adult education in Hungary transformed significantly in which the international and EU changes played an important role. It has

become differentiated and diversified. (Kálmán 2005, Sz. Molnár 2006, Pethő 2000, Zachár 2003, Zrinszky 2005). Though the notion of LLL is widely spread in the country, its real meaning is not embedded yet in people's thinking (Maróti 2002)

This study is focusing on the role these specialized NGOs are playing directly and indirectly, through the trainings and services offered and through their everyday activities in the implementation of adult and life long learning.

II. Background / State of the Art

LLL appeared first in the discipline of pedagogy in the beginning of the 20th century, as a result of the spreading emancipation of teaching and adult learning. However it became a real focal point only in the 1970^{ies} based on the evidences gathered by studies in economics of education reinforced by global trading, and as supranational bodies (UNESCO, OECD, and the European Community) put the topic on their agenda. From the 1990^{ies}, the concept of LLL was broadened (Halász 2002), its philosophy appeared as a new paradigm throughout the international literature and conferences, whereas education policies contributed to reach out to people and disseminate the idea. Economic and employment goals of the Lisbon Strategy (2000) made the implementation of LLL a national priority. In this aspect, the Memorandum of LLL (2000, 2001) was a real milestone – a document that was created by the open method coordination. Ensuring equal opportunities and developing civic competences have been defined as goals not only for the young but also in the adult education documents of the EU. In this process, NGOs are considered an important stakeholder.

Parallel with the birth of LLL as a new paradigm, the debate on the concept of civil society in the changing Eastern-European societies arose again. Researchers discovered that different historical, social and economic development path of countries lead to diverging civil societies and non-profit sectors. Studies carried out in the field during the 1990^{ies} can be divided into two streams: the first one analyzing the new 'third' sector, appearing alongside with the state and the market, from the aspects of the economy (Salamon, Weisbrod, Hansmann, Ben Nér-Gui), and a second one interpreting the phenomenon as a reconsideration of the democratic civil (bourgeois) society as a whole – Jean Cohen, Andrew Arato, Jürgen Habermas, Michael Walzer, John Keane, Charles Taylor, Lambert Zuidervart (Klamer – Zuidhof 2000).

John Keane (2004) set up three types of definition of civil society. The first one includes the empirical-analytical descriptions which look at the civil society as the ideal manifestation of the complex social-political reality. Another view is to interpret the civil society as a political strategy or an action plan and to focus on the points where it differs from the state. Researchers of the third group aim to analyse the role civil society plays in a democracy, and they regard it as morally superior and as 'original good'. Seligman (1997) highlights the co-existence of both the normative and analytical aspects of civil society when examining the political-social institutions (organisations) and the related values and attitudes. At the end of the 20th century non-profit theories tried to find the explanations – often completing each other – for the increasing number of NGOs, for their growing importance in economy, and for the reasons and opportunities of the inter-sectoral cooperation. By now, besides exploring the role they play as service provider in welfare states, it has become more and more important to study their function in the society, the so-called 'global associational revolution' (Salamon – Anheier 1995, 1999).

In Hungary, a number of studies focused on the general characteristics and statistical aspects of non-profit sector (Kuti 1998, Csegényi – Kákai 1999, Bíró 2002, statistic reports), on the presentation of non-profit theories (Bartal 2005, Pavluska 1999), on analysing social

involvement, community development (Péterfi – Nizák 2005, Vercseg 2004, Kuti – Czike 2005) and on a specific segment of the sector or a region of the country (Márkus 2006, Brachinger 2001). Many surveyed the organisations involved in education and training, e.g. the folk high schools (Kovalcsik 1987, Harangi 1986, Sebestyén 1997), schools maintained by foundations, however no systematic research was carried out on the NGOs providing adult education.

This research strongly builds on the findings of the working group of ELTE who developed the training program '*Civil society and NGOs*' and studies related to it (Arapovics 2004, 2006).

The study, for the first time in non-profit research executed in Hungary, assesses the non-profit characteristics of AE, emphasizing those which are less characteristic in the other – budgetary and entrepreneurial – sectors of the field. Till this time there has not been any systematic research executed here on the activities of the non-profit sector in view of its role in non-formal and informal education. The introduction of the Delphi method is another novelty of the research work. The dissertation, furthermore, aims to find evidence whether international trends are reflected in the Hungarian system of non-profit adult education.

III. Problem definition and proposed solution

Questions examined:

- A) What are the tendencies that characterise adult education and training (AE) in Europe and in Hungary? What is the relation with the transformation of the non-profit sector?
- B) To what extent and in which arenas are NGOs present in the Hungarian adult education market?
 - What are the activities, main functions and legal forms of NGOs which are active in AE in Hungary?
 - How can these organisations be characterised in terms of economy, infrastructure and the direction of adult training?
 - How can these organisations be described from the point of view of human resources and organisational development? Is it possible to identify a target group or a specific field where they are present?
 - What are the main financial resources? What are the typical problems related to the daily operation?
 - Does adult training have any characteristics that only relates to NGOs? Is it an advantage or a disadvantage to work in a non-profit form?
- C) What competencies can be acquired when operating as a civil/non-profit organisation? What competencies are needed to professionally manage an NGO? How can future employees and volunteers be prepared for this type of work?
- D) What measures should be taken to improve the situation of adult training NGOs? What type of cooperation between the government and the civil sector is necessary and what concrete steps are needed to enhance NGOs role in the fulfilment of LLL, to make full use of synergies?

Hypotheses

- A) In the European Union, philosophy of LLL has become a paradigm; however this is not the case yet in Hungary (Maróti 2002). Traditionally, historical and social settings influence strongly the role NGOs play in countries' educational activities. Civil and

non-governmental organisations are usually the most typical arena of informal and non-formal learning.

- B) The diversified and multi-sectoral adult education market of Hungary provides a well-identified and increasingly important role to NGOs.
- In addition to the 400-450 NGOs registered by the Hungarian Central Statistical Office (KSH), there are a large number of other NGOs involved in AE whose registered primary activity is different (cultural mission, employment, economy development etc) – it is clearly reflected by the national register of AE providers and by the national list of accredited providers.
 - Regarding the legal form, it is anticipated that *kht*-s – ‘Public Benefit Companies’ – are overrepresented among AE providers of the sector.
 - Operation and income structure of AE provider NGOs is similar to general characteristics of the sector. It is expected to find evidence that resources yielding from education and adult education as basic activity is significant as well as the EU grants. NGOs usually provide education with general and cultural goals, trainings relevant for the civil sector, but they are also present on the market of labour-market related trainings.
 - These NGOs are often managed by pedagogues. NGOs with non-educational mission often lack professionals with AE experience.
 - AE provider NGOs are active in submitting applications for funds, however when implementing projects the biggest task for them is to cope with bureaucracy and administration.
 - AE provider NGOs undertake to add extra value to the service they provide, a task of public interest exceeding the actual contents of the education, which can be acquired through informal learning. Some kind of a democratic attitude is supposed to be reflected in the service they provide. NGOs convey knowledge on self-recognition, social competence, active citizenship, and the relationship between civil attitude and LLL can be demonstrated.
- C) Activities carried out as an employee/volunteer of an NGO develops specific component of one’s personality such as self-recognition and community developer (Bábosik 2004). NGOs often function as learning organisations thus contributing to the learning of their workers and managers. Civil activity promotes the consciously exercised active citizenship, the acquisition of a democratic attitude, the development of competences as defined in the EU documents, among others self-advocacy, communication skills, social knowledge and competences, knowledge and ways of exercising civil rights. On the other hand, managing NGOs yields an opportunity to learn management skills, which enables one to succeed in everyday life and in the labour-market. Work carried out within a professional organisation develops one’s expertise in the field, making professional fulfilment easier.
- D) The research expects to bring together proposals of professionals which can serve as a basis for shaping measures – also applicable on governmental level – to enhance civil activities (e.g. increasing support, donation tax credits, reducing administrative burden etc.). The research also set the goal to facilitate the exchange of views of the involved professionals.

IV. Methodology

The research applied two types of methodology. Firstly, when describing changes of the civil society and NGOs together with the non-profit theories, a *deductive approach* is used. Description, interpretation and comparison are the methods used when presenting

implementation of LLL, educational policy and non-profit characteristics of the countries examined. An *inductive strategy* is applied when describing and analysing results of an empirical research of AE provider NGOs and of the Delphi method survey of professional, complying with the methodology accepted by pedagogy (Falus 2000, Falus-Ollé 2000, Feketéné Szakos 1998, Szabolcs 2001, Kálmán 2005).

In order to define the context for the selection of data recording tool and methodology, the present situation was assessed. Hungarian and EU documents, legal background and bibliography related to the subject were studied. Following this, data recording technique was selected; focus group and control group were identified.

In order to observe main tendencies, *theoretical research* was carried out, *bibliography* was considered, *documents* were analysed and *statistics* were processed which are presented in Chapters 2, 3 and 4. Economy studies NGOs with statistical tools which means there are figures available about the number of organisations, the scope of activities, evolution of the income and expenditure structure, and also the data of the national register of AE providers, the national list of accredited providers, and the list of awarded applications. Nonetheless, statistics leave a number of questions unanswered for example what types of trainings are provided, which additional resources NGOs can obtain support from, how many people they employ etc. To find an answer to these questions, a *questionnaire* was used and the results are presented in Chapter 5. As another component of the empirical research, *in-depth interviews* were carried out with professionals and experienced managers of AE provider NGOs to find answers to quality-related issues. Altogether, the research involved representatives from 141 AE provider NGO, 2 companies and a public administration body, and 15 in-depth interviews were carried out.

The research was carried out with 'traditional' methods, and information was gathered on the non-formal learning activity of *AE provider NGOs*. However, knowing the limited extent of resources available, the sample of the research could not be representative as it was not possible to send out the questionnaire to those organisation which are not registered in the National Register of AE Providers and are not providing adult education *per definitionem* but in fact play a significant role in informal and non-formal learning (e.g. cultural and social organisations). Therefore another empirical research was carried out.

The so-called *Delphi method* was used to create a picture on informal learning processes that characterize NGOs, and to identify related problems and the ways to answer them. In this survey, recognized Hungarian and international civil and AE specialists were involved. In the analysis, 48 specialists were involved representing adult education, the civil sector and related public administration field. Their views were included in a system of a 3-round survey. In the first round, 48 experts had the opportunity to learn the opinions of others and to reply to it, while in the second round 33 experts exchanged views. It was an explicit aim of the research besides the above to facilitate such cooperation among participants. To achieve this aim, the partly anonym 'policy and decision making' Delphi technique was used.

V. Results and findings

1.

The concept of LLL has a two-fold objective: benefits of learning are expected to be utilized in employment policy and labour-market, but in countries with insufficient level of democracy learning is meant to be a tool for raising citizen's awareness and for strengthening the civil society. By applying new research methodology, international organisations made non-formal and informal learning measurable (assessable). According to Eurostat, in 2004 an average of 42 % of the population is engaged in some kind of learning in the member states of EU. However, countries vary greatly with respect to learning activity and attitudes towards utility of learning.

In Hungary, the notion of permanent, recurrent and life long education first appeared in adult education literature in the 1960ies-1970ies (Maróti – Durkó 1968, Maróti 1997), however it became the centre of attention only in the 1990ies, especially after the International Conference on AE in Hamburg (UNESCO 1997) (Harangi 1998). On the opportunity of Hungary's accession to the EU, the Government prepared a LLL strategy (2005). Numerous local experts pointed out that the LLL is widely understood as – according to the supporting policy – a concept for labour-market trainings, and the objective of spreading culture and active citizenship fails to be achieved. (Maróti 2002, Németh 2006, Arapovics 2007). It makes the situation even worse that the level of willingness of the Hungarian population to study doesn't reach half of the average of the EU.

Therefore it is necessary to strengthen awareness of the philosophy of life-wide learning, for example by means of visualisation which can make everybody understand that learning is a long-term investment for both the individual and the society. As a suitable tool for enhancing popularity applicable to the Hungarian culture and traditions, it is recommended to further develop results of the Canadian model of First Nation Holistic Lifelong Program. Community learning is symbolized as a 'world tree', the tree reaching to the sky, or the Wisdom Tree of the Bible, which is capable to encompass formal, non-formal and informal learning as well.

2.

System of AE institutions has undergone several changes in Hungary, and by now it has become multi-sectoral (Zachár 2006). NGOs are active in all segment of the sector, with all types of trainings. NGOs are involved both in the school-system based education and beyond it; more typically in the non-school system based adult education and training. These represent a specific element of the AE system, namely the traditionally self-organized cultural associations, scientific organisations, free universities, folk high schools, clubs, foundations which provide non-formal and informal learning. Yet, the efficiency of these organisations is challenged as their ever changing resources force them to shift from project to project all the time to find the means of their operation.

3.

The number of educational NGOs has steadily increased in Hungary from the 1990ies. In 2004, there were 7 600 educational NGOs registered, mainly in the form of a foundation, active especially in the education of the young. The overall share of educational NGOs is about 15%, and, as for the legal form, a third of all the foundations. The general characteristics of supporting system apply to the educational NGOs as well, that is the considerably vast amount of state support is provided mainly to public benefit companies – *kht-s* – or public foundations maintained by the state or municipalities. Educational NGOs, undertaking public tasks as well, significantly contribute to the promotion of learning of the Hungarian population. Regarding its impact on employment, the AE provider civil sector plays a more substantial role than it would be justified by the support received. According to the data received from KSH, 7 % of the educational NGOs, approximately 400 organisations provide adult education as primary activity. One third of the educational NGOs operate in the form 'association', and two-third of them as 'foundation'. Statistics group AE provider organisations' activities as follows: cultural learning, language teaching, vocational training and further education, folk high schools, multi-purpose and other type of adult education. The share of income from primary activity is exceptionally high in the case of AE provider NGOs, and they can also benefit from a relatively high level of donation compared to the sector, still they are strongly dependent on state support. This situation has also contributed to the fact that the objective of their activities has shifted from cultural-educational aims to labour-market oriented trainings.

According to the Hungarian Act on Adult Training (2001.), registration is mandatory for all providers. The legislation results that the real number of AE provider NGOs is better reflected in the national register than in the statistics of KSH. According to the former, there have been 878 AE provider NGOs registered – twice as many as in the statistics. The total share of registered NGOs is 14% which is a considerable market share. Surprisingly, the research discovered that the two groups cover different organisations. It means that principally the professional, competitive adult education is provided by NGOs whose primary activity is *not* adult education. Most of the organisations in the registry are foundations or associations, though *kht*-s are overrepresented: their share is close to 20%. Advocacy organisations, trade unions, public bodies, unions, confederations are also registered in a relatively large ratio, compared to their actual number.

An unexpected finding of the research is that 85% of the NGOs with AE provision as primary activity is *not* registered in national register of adult education providers.

Interviewed experts gave various explanations to this phenomenon. It is argued that many are not aware of the legislation and the obligation to register. Provision of adult education is not the primary activity of many organisations, but it is often a kind of supplementary service to the main activity. Some pedagogues working in the school-based system do not know the legislative framework of Adult Education, so the organisation they manage can not operate at the required level. It is caused by dilettantism, lack of information or negligence. Another justification for the above is that some organisations do not wish to carry out activities under the jurisdiction of the Act on Adult Education as it would mean a lot of administrative burden for them, even if adult education is not a continuous activity of the organisation. These NGOs are constantly struggling with financial liquidity and are not in the position to employ trained administrative staff member. As a result, free universities, providers of cultural programs or personal development/social programs define these services as ‘cultural’ or ‘social’ activities. This way they can escape from the obligation to enter into contract with the participant, to create a training program, and to provide statistics constantly to the authorities. Eventually, the research unexpectedly and unintentionally discovered illegal operation. On the other hand, this finding questions the adequacy of the legal background.

Consequently, NGOs providing high-quality and competitive adult education are not the ones included in the national statistics but those registered in the national registry, complying with the legislation, and especially those with accreditation.

4.

Adult training accreditation separates AE provider institutions and NGOs, as it guarantees the availability of a quality assurance system and the material and human resources required by the legislation. Obtaining program and institution accreditation entitles the organisation to receive national and EU grants and tax credits.

From 2003 to the first quarter of 2007, 1293 AE providers have applied for *institution accreditation*, of which 192 were NGOs – *more than 15%*. During the period of the research, 2254 programs were accredited, including *close to 450 submitted by NGOs: 20 % of the total number of accredited programs*. Looking into the details, one can find that 20 % of the accredited institutions were public foundations and *kht*-s, while it was nearly 50% in the case of accredited programs. Altogether, there were 269 AE provider organisation which had at least one type of accreditation, whereas 62 had both.

Comparing accredited training programs offered by NGOs with those of the other two sectors, it is visible that NGOs are not involved in the infrastructure-based industrial, technical trainings nor in the driving licence trainings. On the other hand, NGOs are overrepresented in the provision of accredited programs tailored either to complement activities of public benefit and social caring or to write a grant application and managing NGOs and projects.

Representatives of NGOs involved in the research were critical over the bureaucratic nature of the accreditation procedure, the level of accreditation fees, and complained about the missing grant opportunities aimed at obtaining accreditation.

5.

The empirical research analyzed the registered AE provider NGOs. The below statements refer to 141 AE provider organisations registered either with KSH or in the national AE provider register and are based on their feedbacks:

- In general, AE organisations suffer from serious financial problems which effects organisational culture and HR development. On the other hand, operational difficulties are partly a consequence of the missing strategic thinking. It was experienced that in many cases not only resources are missing but also the urge to learn, to develop. Some managers think HR development is not only too expensive but also needless to invest in as they consider their knowledge and qualification are at a sufficient level to complete the tasks, and they are not open to learn new things. This leads to the paradox of LLL in AE organisations.
- Accreditation could be a perspective for AE organisations. Both the program and the institution accreditation could bring a better quality in the operation of the NGO. The training program could become a real value, and it could bring acknowledgment to educational professionals. It would make trainings more attractive for participants who also expect good quality and the possibility of tax credit from the training. Obtaining and maintaining the institution accreditation certificate could be an objective for the organisations and may serve as an incentive to engage in human and infrastructural developments. Furthermore, accreditation opens the door to new resources, to participation in EU projects.
- Characteristics of AE providing NGOs were examined by the research. Compared to budgetary institutions and companies, the non-profit legal form give rise to significant advantages, especially the tax, customs, duty and other reductions in case of organisations of public benefits or prominently public benefit. However, NGOs need to comply with the strict rules of transparency, accountability and incompatibility. Eventually the real added-value of NGOs should be mentioned i.e. social participation. It was a disappointing result of the research that only a very few NGOs convey explicitly civil values, which is otherwise considered to be the real mission of an NGO. This small group of AE provider NGOs is seeking to disseminate and to raise the awareness on citizenship education, to strengthen local social public, the establishment of democracy based on participation. These classic AE provider NGOs aim to strengthen civil society by providing professional training related to the non-profit field, especially to the management of NGOs. As for the methodological-didactical tools, there are no special preferences by NGOs; they use the generally popular, up-to-date methods of andragogy, client-focused education, techniques of moderation, with a teacher as facilitator. Again it can be observed that trainings provided by NGOs tend to shift target group and content towards the labour-market. Nevertheless, civil sector should recognize that trainings related to democracy should be promoted. They should invest the income yielded by profitable trainings into these activities as no other organisation will undertake the task of educating civil awareness to the population. 'It is a top priority to organize programs and trainings to enhance democracy and involvement as civil acting can not be expected without learning democracy' (Varga T. – Varga M. –Vercseg:389)
- Income that AE provider organisations (both in KSH statistics and those involved in the research) gain from basic activity highly exceeds the average of the sector. About half of the income results from adult education and related services, while state

support is assumed to be about 25-30% in case of AE providers and over 50% in case of educational NGOs. Nonetheless, a significant share of state support was transferred to *kht*-s and public foundations. Only a very few organisations received normative per capita support, and after the change of legislation in 2007, only a handful of NGOs have been eligible for it. In general, AE provider private foundations and associations have very limited resources to operate. The main supporter for most NGOs was the National Civil Base Program (NCA), but grants from the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour (NIVE) and the Employment Public Foundation (OFA). EU grants and calls for application open to accredited AE providers are more suitable for the well-developed, professionally managed, strong – and often rather institutionalized – organisations. Based on a study of Rózsás and Virág (2006), it can be concluded, that only those NGOs are able to receive EU (and other larger) funds which have enough capital to cover self-contribution. Strategic thinking is familiar to them, they have experience with implementing middle-term plans and projects, furthermore they are well-developed as organisation, i.e. have a system of registration, accounting, monitoring and quality assurance that allows them to handle supports, to fulfil documentation requirements, to ensure transparency and implement the project on the required level. Some experts believe there are only a few organisations in Hungary which fulfils the above criteria, but organisations can become capable of coping if they previously got strong enough and gained enough experience with smaller (few millions of HUF) grants (Kuti:2006).

- As regards the activity, there are also a large number of NGOs with activities like social, research or scientific activity, health preservation, culture, professional service, economic advocacy who do provide adult education. Half of the NGOs involved in the research organize professional trainings. As for the target group, disadvantaged or those in need are often the beneficiary of the trainings however this is close connection with the support programs of the state. Analyzing the content of the accredited programs, one can see that NGOs differ from the two other sectors in that they do not provide infrastructure-based training such as industrial, technical and driving licence training. On the other hand, NGOs are overrepresented in the provision of accredited programs tailored either to complement activities of public benefit and social caring or to write a grant application and managing NGOs and projects. Among the non-accredited training programs, it is quite typical to find trainings related to civil and cultural knowledge. Most organisations also provide adult training services, usually to assess prior learning, but also orientation, guidance and interview techniques. Organisations have very different financial and material resources.
- With the help of the questionnaire, analysis sought to map up the employment forms of pedagogues, andragogues and experienced adult trainers. Interviews helped to understand HR and organisational development. NGOs are struggling with such financial difficulties that there is no point in analysing the efficacy of HR usage. Systemic HR functions are missing even with those successful NGOs who enjoy a considerable income and employ a large number of people (job analysis and planning, recruitment, evaluation, incentives, performance evaluation, HR development). During the research, only a very few organisations could be observed with a well-functioning management, full-time employees in the provision of adult education. Real planning, long-term strategy was typically missing. These NGOs operate day by day, from one grant to the next one. The research also revealed that 90% of the managers do have a degree in pedagogy or andragogy or a 3-year experience. In case of non-educational NGOs, many trainers do not have qualifications in pedagogy/andragogy, or they did not answer to this question. The level of strength and development of an NGO

determines whether the organisation works with employees or with volunteers. The number and tasks of volunteers is the same as with other type of NGOs: the more the organisation is institutionalized, the fewer volunteers and the more employees – in flexible employment – they have. The majority of AE provider NGOs works with qualified pedagogues or andragogues either as an employee or a volunteer worker.

- Some managers with pedagogical qualification identify the absence of strategic thinking as a problem though this is indispensable for managing an organisation. A study carried out in 2000 revealed that professionals with economic and legal qualifications are missing from the sector. At the same time, pedagogues are confident about the level of their preparedness for directing an organisation, and they do not or can not participate in training where they could acquire management skills and development competences (Kern – Szabó 2000). Findings of the present research confirm this statement. HR development of employees is also missing. Answers received in the research don't reflect motivation for further studies. The present survey concludes the same findings as those of the Nonprofit Research Group lead by Mária Zám (2006), who surveyed NGOs providing employment-related services. These organisations can also be characterized as having self-made men as managers, without economic qualification. However, tasks are often more complex than these managers are able to cope with effectively. Civil courage and creativity are present but are insufficient for managing all aspects of adult education service provision. Existence uncertainties can 'numb' these managers and make them negligent which risks legal operation. Only a few managers can be regarded as loyal to the organisation; financial constraints prevent them from keeping good work-force/volunteers. Workers, often trained by the NGO, leave the organisation. Only a very few case were observed where employees/volunteers had participated in training to develop professional competencies. Paradox arises with people engaged in implementing LLL but failing to be able to adapt to changes and developing professional and other skills and competences themselves.
- It was assumed that the majority of AE provider NGO representatives were committed to 'civil values' and 'civil awareness'. It was disappointing to find that only a part of these people trust in the power of civil action, and only a very few AE provider NGOs are willing to take this responsibility or to convey this kind of knowledge. The role of transferring culture is fading, too. The research presupposed the presence of a democratic attitude in AE provided by NGOs. However, it was unfortunately true only in case of a small number of NGOs. It is surprising to find that NGOs focus more on offering vocational trainings. Profit-oriented companies do not while budgetary institutions rarely undertake the task to provide training in civil topics, in community development. As for the form, associations, advocacy, private foundations are those NGOs who engage in trainings aimed at strengthening civil society, implementation of social public and democracy. The 'public benefit' status results in a number of advantages to the organisation: benefits, donations, 1 % tax collection, earmarked grant applications. It is true though that no dividend is paid after the revenue, and NGOs have to comply with transparency and incompatibility rules. Organisations however only consider the possible advantages of the non-profit operation. Many believe that these advantages can assure competitiveness while concentrating on the service and quality. NGOs competing in the AE market were found eager to provide high-quality service similar to profit-oriented companies. In certain cases, the non-profit form was only a hidden way to gain extra profit.

- It would be worth conducting a research to see to what extent NGOs initially established to serve local interests have turned away from the original goals while ‘hunting’ for resources, and how local plans have changed shape ever since.

6.

The Delphi research based on the qualitative survey provided clear evidence that in many respects *civil-NGOs play an important role in informal learning*. The research made it clear that civil activity and the task to operate an NGO can make one acquire spontaneously *social, communication and entrepreneurial skills and key competences*. The research proved that NGOs are learning organisations – which is a consequence of their very nature and existence. A number of experts highlighted the keenness of NGOS on acquiring openness towards the methodology of ‘learning to learn’ and LLL. The acquisition of these key competences is a recommended aim in the EU Members States. It also suggests that NGOs should be supported to survive and develop.

7.

The research underlined the *most important tasks for the civil-NGOs in the realisation of LLL*:

- Strengthening the civil society, enhancing civil activity
- Provision of assistance in and assurance of the methodology of ‘learning to learn’
- Transferring community experience, community organisation and development
- Organisation of trainings of citizenry, learning democracy, representing democratic public life and the operation of society
- Implementing local thinking, assessing and addressing local needs, provision of services related to AE
- Cooperation, co-operative techniques, teamwork, networking
- Open trainings, creation of open thinking
- Shaping people’s mind and attitudes, learning behaviour norms, supporting the change of culture
- Development of skills and competences (in general)
- Training future civil/non-profit experts, transferring civil knowledge
- Training of volunteers, members, employees
- Training of the disadvantaged and those at risk of social exclusion (elderly, unemployed, handicapped etc)

8.

Experts expressed – also as a kind of criticism – what *future measures, governmental and non-governmental cooperation, and what concrete steps they think are necessary*:

- Revising the state support of adult education
- Recognizing volunteer work
- Reducing bureaucracy in general
- Making education system more flexible
- Enhancing financing, more support to AE provider NGOs
- Increasing the grant opportunities for AE provider NGOs (e.g. within the frames of the National Civil Found/NCA)
- Simplifying the AE accreditation system
- Assuring the conditions of sector neutrality in adult education
- Recognition of informal and non-formal learning, developing assessment tools
- Supporting distance work and part-time work (within NGOs)
- Teaching citizenship knowledge from elementary school level and throughout compulsory schooling

- Supporting the accreditation of AE provider NGOs, reconsidering quality measurement

The present research highlights the fact that the legal background for adult education development in Hungary is highly overregulated. The ever changing institutional system responsible for management, registration, accreditation and controlling of the field means another excessive burden for stakeholders. The support system has never really been accepted. One of the unexpected results of the present research is that the consequences of the above as well as the lack of active citizenship determine the field of adult education. Findings of the present research can contribute to government policy improvements.

9.

One aim of the present research was to serve as a communication channel among different stakeholders such as experts in adult education and the non-profit field, decision makers on both sides (civil and governmental), researchers and practitioners. This aim has partly been fulfilled. Reading each other's opinion did not lead to a real debate, however the acceptance of various alternatives was well reflected in the answers and in the final order of values set up by statistical methods. Information provided by experts didn't differ significantly, but it became possible to measure differences of opinions by analyzing their dispersal in the answers. Members of the panel didn't know who influenced them actually to revise views thus prejudice was avoided. Proposals formulated on the basis of the research reached policy makers too as part of the aim to foster dialog.

Summary of findings and cluster analysis reassured the presumption that acquiring formal/technical knowledge (management, proposal writing, organization, PR etc.) i.e. operation of the organization cannot make one real civil activist. *Democracy should be learned as well, it is not the legal form which makes the organization democratic.* It will only become democratic due to people involved, the individual thinking, and the shared values of the community.

10.

The research was not carried out for its own sake. *The experiences gained are used in concrete pedagogical programs.* The programs developed focus on the acquisition of democratic and civil knowledge, the learning society and the philosophy of LLL, besides skills related to the operation of an organization. Experts formulated what can be learned through non-profit work. Our aim has been the opposite: to transfer these competences through vocational training. Members of the 'Nonprofit Workshop of Training' collaborated in the development of training programs. The new qualification called *community-civil organizer* has been registered in the National Register of Qualifications. From 2009, several institutions will launch the new post-secondary training program. The research findings were also used to update the so-called *non-profit manager* VET program as well.

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